

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST TEMPLE



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TO: The Presiding Bishop and General Board, Board of Bishops, Council of Pastors and Elders, Officers, Members and Friends of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Everywhere

FROM: Bishop Samuel P. Nesbitt, "**The Still Small Voice**"

DATE: August 5, 2012

Greetings:

We are now in the eighth month of the year 2012, and it is with great joy that I greet you and wish for you the blessings that God, our loving Father, gives to those who love and serve Him by loving and serving His people. Despite the vicissitudes of life that may have caused us to undergo experiences that we were tempted to classify as bad times; because we love the Lord, and are the chosen according to His purpose, God always assured us that all things would work out for our good. Thank God for His goodness to His beloved. As the beloved children of God we should seek to please Him in all that we do. It is my prayer that we will examine ourselves to be sure that we are right with God and with each other. If we have sinned against our fellowmen, we should repent of our sins and establish a right relationship with God and with man. If we really love God, we must love each other. I John 4:20 tells us that we cannot love God and hate our brothers. If we are willing to confess our sins, God will forgive us. This will make our preaching more effective and souls will be won to the Kingdom. If our Church is to be what God wants it to be, let us take this as a period of special consecration and then we will be ready to engage in the Lord's business with clean hearts.

I READINESS - ARE YOU READY TO ANSWER THE CALL?

Recent reports from around the Church inform us that God has called certain members of our fellowship from labor to reward. With love and compassion we mourn their loss and pray for their families and all of us who remain. May the love of the God of all comforts sustain us and help us to review our record and see if we are **READY TO ANSWER**

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THE CALL. If our record is not as it should be, there is hope for us within the Word of God. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

II. CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES NEW JURISDICTIONAL BISHOPS AND AUXILIARY BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC.

We honor and commend all of our beloved brethren who have been counted worthy to be selected and chosen by the General Board, and approved by the General Assembly, to be consecrated as Episcopal Leaders within the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. in these very perilous times, when it appears that "the angel that was thrown out of heaven" is deceiving some of our "unwatchful leaders," we need leaders who will be true representatives of the noble faith in which we believe. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "I, therefore, as a prisoner for the Lord, appeal to and beg you to walk (lead a life) worthy of the (divine) calling in which you have been called (with behavior that is a credit to the summons to God's service, living as becomes you) with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another and making allowance because you love one another." (Ephesians 4:1-2 AMP)

Our beloved Church needs more Spirit-Filled Leaders, who will follow the example of the Head of the Church — *Christ our Savior* — pursuant to the guidelines He has given us in the Word, "Our rule of Faith and Practice." We need men who will not compromise the Truth or acquiesce to what is wrong for special favor or gain for themselves at the expense and detriment of others. We need men who are honest, compassionate, humble, liberal, and not ostentatious: Men who are not greedy for money and who follow the rule: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." God knows our needs and is in the process of giving us who and what we need to enable us to accomplish the Mission that He is constantly revealing for our Church. It may come as a surprise to some, and an answer to the prayers of the Faithful, that our God-given mission may not be accomplished by the means and pattern that we are attempting to effect. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with looking impressive, per se, but looks may become depressive when our actions are not expressive of what is needed to lift the spirit of souls that are patiently listening to hear the Word which is "Spirit and Life."

These words from St. Paul's letter to the Romans reaffirm the fact that reading the scriptures can help keep our faith alive. "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4) In them we get a retrospective view of how God worked in the past, and because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, we may understand

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how He may work today. In Isaiah 43:18 -19 God is pictured as doing a "New Thing." Instead of destroying Israel, His chosen people, for their sins, "He looked beyond their faults and saw their need." For His own sake, He promised to forget the past and to affect a New **Thing** for Israel that would cause her to flourish again. It is true that God's mercy endureth forever; nevertheless, He promised to pay appropriate wages for sin and the New **Thing** He performed provided wages for those responsible for Israel's sins: The Leaders.

God, Who knows all things, recognized the fact that Israel was respecting and following the leaders that He placed over them. To have destroyed Israel for "obeying the ones who had the rule over them" would have been most unjust, by the standard that was set. God rendered judgment for Israel and against the leaders as He said in Isaiah 9:14 -16, "Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and bulrush in one day. The ancient and honorable, He is the head; and, the prophet that teacheth lies, He is the tail. For the leaders of My people cause them to err; and, they that are led of them are destroyed." It's always safe to rely on God's judgment: **He never makes a mistake.**

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS-WHY THE DELAY?

It appears that the Executive Leadership of our beloved Church Of God In Christ, Inc., whose responsibility it is to operate the affairs of the Church when the General Assembly is not in session, seems to lack the wherewithal to expedite certain important ecclesiastical and other matters in an efficient, timely and Godly manner, thus causing the Church undue expenses, public embarrassment and loss of prestige in certain circles. It is shocking to observe the legal and other blunders that are constantly made by those of us who are reputed to be well informed relative to the laws, doctrines, and constitution of our Church. They make the very costly mistakes, we cover the losses, the same people remain in office, and it seems as if it is "just business as usual."

THE EMMANUEL COGIC CASE, in Wichita, Kansas

A case which could have been solved by a 5th Grade student, who had been attending Sunday School, has been in the civil courts since 2004. For the past eight years, the loyal members throughout the Church have been paying their Loyalty Reports and Credential Holders Reports, but the money is being wasted in legal fees, court costs, and other unnecessary costs. Eight years of legal and other fees could certainly feed and care for hundreds of our brothers and sisters in Africa or Haiti, as well as, needy persons within our local congregations. We enjoy seeing our leaders smile when we give them big offerings, and we are delighted when we make sacrifices to provide luxurious hotel

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accommodations for them when they are our guests; but, it hurts us to see our brothers and sisters mistreated by those whom we are taught to honor and respect.

When searching for a justifiable reason why it may appear that the Leadership of our beloved Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Is standing by and not offering to assist one of its struggling, innocent local congregations - "the basic unit of the Church Of God in Christ, Inc. - in its court battle, we found that" Whether by design or misadventure, and in violation of our "rule of faith and practice," which says: "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints." "Now, therefore, it is an utter failure for you that you go to the law against one another," (I Cor. 6:1 & 7) we found that the leadership authorized the joining of the National Church with the Southwest Kansas Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction against Emmanuel Church. This act rendered the Leaders impotent.

GOD SAW YOU WHEN YOU DID IT -

When we review some of the cases in our Church, and observe how our brothers and sisters have been made to suffer as the result of the biased, irregular, unethical and unjust acts of those responsible for conducting the affairs of the Church when the General Assembly is not in session, I am compelled to remind all who may be concerned that they are always under strict surveillance, because "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). He has honored them by placing them in leadership roles and He requires that; they who rule over men "must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (II Sam. 23:3) "For He has shown you, O man, what is good: And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8) And "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 7:12)"... to him that knows to do good, and does not do it, to him it is a sin." (Jas. 4:17) It seems reasonable to conclude that those who accepted the executive leadership positions in the National Church did so with a clear knowledge and understanding of the requirements associated with the said positions and of the serious consequences that might result if they, with knowledge, willfully failed to comply with the requirements.

IN THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, AS FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, WE ARE TAUGHT TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE -

We show others how we expect them to treat us by the way we treat them. With this as our standard, it is reasonable to conclude that, whether by design or misadventure, it appears that the actions of the General Board precipitated circumstances that resulted in

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psychological, physical, financial, and personal harm to the leadership and saints of the Delaware Jurisdiction. As an integral part of the Church Of God in Christ, when one part of the body is hurt, the whole body feels it. An injured little toe can cripple the whole body and cause it to suffer great pain if proper attention is not given to the little toe.

THE GENERAL BOARD NEEDS OUR HELP AND WE SHOULD BE GLAD TO BE HELPERS ONE OF ANOTHER -

The death of the senior General Board member, plus the incapacitation of several of the remaining members, may seem to suggest that the Board is not able to live up to its expectations. Before we make our final evaluation, we should give consideration to the following factors. They are all men of senior years, good men of limited training, full-time pastors of congregations, jurisdictional prelates of sizable jurisdictions, business men in their local communities and heads of families. The Presiding Bishop pastors a congregation of over 27,000 members, he is guest speaker for multiple jurisdictional conventions and convocations and episcopal inaugural celebrations, obsequies for bishops and other places where his presence is desired, welcomed and graciously received. We are blessed to have persons with such unusual talents who are willing to serve us, and we should pray that they will be willing to accept the professional and other competent help that is available to them for the benefit of themselves and those whom they are called to serve.

When talking with persons who are charged with the responsibility of having been participants in the decision-making process which resulted in the problems in Delaware, I was informed that they were not participants in the process. They further indicated that they were not in favor of what took place, and that they thought the total Board did not agree with the action that was hastily taken. It appears that they saw no reason for bringing such an outlandish action against a faithful and loyal servant of the Church. .

TO MAKE A MISTAKE IS HUMAN, BUT TO FORGIVE IS DIVINE -

Judging from the information I received, I am of the opinion that the General Board's action against Bishop Holsey was triggered by information from a source that was thought to be reliable and which was working for the best interest of all concerned. In reliance upon unverified legal and other advice, they approved the initiation of action against an innocent brother, accusing him of things that only "the angel that was thrown out of heaven, and his associates," could have contrived. It was most painful and embarrassing for the accused and his family, and the saints in Delaware; but, it was also a **TEST** of our Faith and what we teach. I am happy to report that while it appears that the leader and saints of Delaware were thrown into "the fiery furnace," with the expectation

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that they might be consumed, I am happy to report that when I visited them in their 2011 Convocation and 2012 Workers Meeting they were singing and dancing in the flame. When I checked to see why they were rejoicing, I saw somebody in the flame with them.
WHAT'S HIS NAME? JESUS!

The Board of Bishops and Judiciary Board, the highest judicatory authority of the Church Of God in Christ, have cleared Bishop Holsey of all false charges that were brought against him, and the process that brings healing and recovery is now underway. In my opinion, an honest apology from the Presiding Bishop and General Board is the therapeutic balm that is needed to foster complete healing of the psycho-socio-economic situation in Delaware. It is my prayer that the suggested apology will be gladly given, thus making them eligible to be considered possible candidates for membership on the highest executive board of our great Church during the next quadrennium. Their failure to give a positive response just might nullify their eligibility for consideration for membership on the General Board of the Church. We need Board members who "are led by the Spirit of God." We need men/women who will "do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God." God knows our needs and will supply them if we earnestly seek Him in prayer. **Let us pray without ceasing.**

ACTION NEWS PRAISE REPORT FROM THE CRIME SCENE IN DELAWARE

In order to gain firsthand information of the happenings in the Delaware Jurisdiction; clothed in "the armor of light" I made two visits to Delaware: in the 2011 Holy Convocation and in the 2012 Workers Meeting. It was just wonderful to enjoy the fellowship of the saints.

THE LEADER AND SAINTS OF THE DELAWARE JURISDICTION RECOGNIZE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FALSELY ACCUSED, MISTREATED AND VILIFIED BY THEIR LEADERS, but the words of Joseph in Gen. 50:20: "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good" express the sentiments of their heart.

Following the example of the Head of the Church when He was dying on the cross; He said in Luke 23:34: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," they have forgiven their leaders, even though their leaders have not admitted their wrong or asked to be forgiven. To me, **that's just like Jesus.**

IV. "WE, THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, HOLD THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AS CONTAINED IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS OF OUR BIBLE AS OUR RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE."

The 32 words, hereinbefore stated, are the first three lines of our "Declaration of Faith and Preamble," as cited on page I of the COGIC Manuel. A proper understanding of the statement seems to suggest that we accept the spiritual principles and guidelines for Holy Living, as set forth in the Holy Bible, as the guide for our lives. To us, the Holy Bible is the only infallible written **word of God** and was written for our "**Learning.**" Our Founder, Bishop C. H. Mason, believed the Bible with all his heart. Those who were associated with him believed what the Bible said and they carried it with them wherever they went. They preached with authority, they were fearless, and they were respected as men of God because they gave evidence of believing what the Bible said by demonstrating what they preached in their lives.

Beginning in 1968, when we renounced our original one MAN leadership model, that was based upon what we believed was the pattern set in the Bible, it appears that we also renounced the Bible and what it teaches. In place of the Holy Bible, and the need to comply with what it teaches, it appears that under the new organizational structure a poorly written document, the **COGIC Constitution**; approved by the General Assembly, was adopted "as our 'Rule of Faith and Practice.'" The record shows that for the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., the Constitution that is void of God, is not appropriate for us to follow. For more than 45 years we have been trying to amend it to meet our needs, but with little or no success. The task is now in the hand of a "Blue Ribbon" Committee, but I don't think changing the color or the Committee's Ribbon will help: We must change our ways, we must **REPENT** for having left the **BIBLE** and return to it.

V. WE HAVE NO JUSTIFIABLE REASON FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE HOLY BIBLE AS "OUR RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE" -

In the 22nd Chapter of II Kings, we are told that King Josiah, "the Good King" of Judah, was violating the Law because it was lost. As they were working in the Temple Hilkiyah the High Priest found the Book of the Law in the rubble. He sent it to King Josiah, and when he had heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his robes. He ordered Hilkiyah to go and inquire of the Lord as to what the Lord required of him. Hilkiyah and his associates went to Jerusalem to speak to the Prophetess Huldah who told them that God was going to bring disaster upon Judah and its people because they had forsaken Hun and burned incense to other gods. God saved Josiah because of his humble spirit when the Book of the Law was brought to him.

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King Josiah and Judah could plead ignorance of the Law because the Book of the Law had been lost, but the Leaders and members of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., can't plead ignorance of the Bible because it has never been lost. The fact is, we have thousands of Bibles, in multiple translations and on tapes and DVD's, available to us each day. The record shows that the Church had thousands of bibles printed with the Church's name on them. They were sold to make money for the Church's use. Because we have the Bible with us, and because we are able to read, I will refer you to the Bible and let it speak to you in a way that only it can do. Huldah the Prophetess interpreted the Law for King Josiah, but I am going to let God speak to you from His **Word. Please hear what thus saith the Lord.**

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Gal. 6:7)

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Prov. 14:12 and 16:25)

"He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." (II Sam. 23:3)

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." (Prov. 28:13)

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (II Pet. 3:9)

VI. CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC., YESTERDAY AND TODAY -

Beginning in 1907, under the leadership of Bishop C. H. Mason, who was accepted by the first General Assembly of the Church as our God-given leader, the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., experienced unusual spiritual and physical growth. One anointed man, led by God, and backed by men and women who believed what he preached, led the Church for more than 54 years. By prayer and preaching of the **WORD**, from the open **BIBLE**, persons from all walks of life were converted to Holiness: Lawyers, and doctors, bankers and businessmen, and a host of persons whom God had delivered from sin. They were all

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glad to join the happy crowd that God had made One in Him. Bishop Mason was a strong supporter of Women in the Ministry, and early in his ministry he appointed Mother Lizzie Roberson to be Overseer of the Women's Work. The record shows that women evangelists were great soul winners and Church builders. They could go into places where the men seemed afraid to venture. Some of the earlier women were midwives, they could sew and they were teachers and a great support and complement to the ministry of the men. The record will affirm the fact that if it were not for the women of the Church Of God In Christ we would not have a Church. Bishop Mason was aware of the vital role that the women played in the Church; therefore, in what has been called his "declining years," he sought to make sure their place in the leadership of the Church. The writer of the COGIC Manual was careful to make it clear that Bishop Mason, in his declining years, appointed **seven men** as commissioners to assist him, and he also listed the dates when this was done. It is indeed true that Bishop Mason appointed **seven (7) men as commissioners**, but it is also true that he appointed **one (1) female man**, Mother Lillian Brooks Coffee, Mother Roberson's successor, to serve as a member of the **commission**. **The commission was comprised of eight (8) persons, not seven (7):** Bishops A. B. McEwen, J. S. Bailey, O. M. Kelly, J. O. Patterson, U. E. Miller, S. M. Crouch, O. T. Jones, Sr., and Mother Lillian B. Coffee.

For your information, and in order that you may have a great appreciation for the wise leadership of Bishop Mason, I was present in the General Council of the Church Of God In Christ, the Morning Session, December 10, 1955, when the appointment was made and when Bishop Mason prayed for the success of the Commission, which included **Mother Lillian Brooks Coffee, a dynamic, highly intelligent woman**. The following is what took place when Mother Coffee was named to the Commission:

Bishop W. G. Shipman, Chairman of the Council, made the following statement: "Bishop C. H. Mason is the head of the Church Of God In Christ, and whatever Bishop Mason says, that I will do." He further stated "that Bishop Mason's word is the law of this Church, and that we all abide by whatever Bishop Mason says." After he finished speaking, Bishop A. B. McEwen, Chairman of the Commission, had the names of the following persons read who had been added to the special Commission. They were Bishops O. T. Jones, S. M. Crouch, and U. E. Miller. He also read the name of Mother Lillian B. Coffee who was also appointed to the Commission. After the appointments were made and confirmed, Bishop Mason gave some fatherly counsel, prayed for them and the Council proceeded with other business

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I think it is safe to say that at least 85% of the membership of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. is **female**, but our present constitution and laws of the Church limit their representation in the General Assembly in such a way that makes it appear that they are of less value to the Church Of God In Christ than the male **men**. In the General Assembly, the male **men** seem to be in complete control and perhaps this is one reason why such little progress is made in effecting worthwhile programs for the Church. The National Women's Convention, organized by Mother Lillian Brooks Coffee more than 50 years ago, is a good example of the ingenuity of the women of the Church. In those days when the hotels, businesses, and trains were segregated Mother Coffee designed a program which placed her convention in the hotels throughout the nation and arranged for the delegates to receive all of the benefits that other conventions received at rates which were affordable. Today, it is the best organized convention in the Church Of God In Christ. The leadership of our Church could certainly use the insights that the women, if allowed the opportunity to utilize them, could give to the Church to enhance our total program.

It appears that in most circles of our Church, the women are the better prepared educationally, academically, scientifically, and culturally than the male population of our beloved Church. They are the educators, administrators, supervisors, and skilled professionals in many areas of our society. While we seem to be proud of their accomplishments, **wisdom** does not seem to move us to provide for greater utilization of their expertise to help move our Church forward. Our recent Bible Band topics have featured the **wisdom writers**, calling our attention to the importance of wisdom in the lives of those who would live Godly and productive lives. **Wisdom** is pictured as being with God in the creation and in everything that God caused to come into existence as a part of this wonderful **creation** in which we live. Those who are led by and follow **wisdom** are classified as **wise**, but those who fail to adhere to what **wisdom** dictates are classified as unwise or **fools**. One who walks in the path **of wisdom** will become **perfect** and a model for others to follow, and the end of that person will be **peace**.

My **special prayer**: That God will inspire the wise and Godly women of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. to rise up and claim the place of leadership in our beloved Church that Bishop C. H. Mason, our divinely inspired Founder, sought to place them while he walked here with us. And, may we - male and female - with one accord - as were the 120 men and women in the upper room on the day of Pentecost - be filled with the Holy Ghost and empowered to go forth speaking in other tongues that people from all nations may hear of the "wonderful works of God," believe and be saved.

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VII. THERE MUST BE A BETTER WAY -

On page 2 of the November 2011 Issue of The Whole Truth magazine, the official magazine of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., is the following announcement: **Consecrated Jurisdictional Bishops 2011 Holy Convocation.** There is a list of 18 names, and the name "**Bishop Designate Detroit Williams**, Prelate, Central Florida First Jurisdiction is listed as number 17 on the list. The Whole Truth staff published what it hoped would be the **whole truth**, but we have information that what was published as **The Whole Truth** just may be **The Truth** with a **hole** in it. As I look through the **hole**, the name **Bishop Designate Detroit Williams** does not appear, and I am in a quandary as to why he was not consecrated as the announcement proclaimed.

Unlike many of his associates in ministry, he has always demonstrated an appreciation for the "social graces" and an appetite for higher knowledge. This set him apart from many of his associates in ministry, thus many called him a loner. In seeking to prepare for the ministry, to which he felt he was called, he attended and finished college, Seminary and other Graduate Studies. He studied music and participated in those areas of the fine arts that would enhance his ministry. Bishop Henry Williams, first Jurisdictional Bishop of Central Florida, saw his potential and brought him from Alachua, a small town, to Gainesville to assist him. At the death of Bishop Williams, he became pastor of Williams Temple Church and developed it into an outstanding religious center in Gainesville. Because of his training, respect for leadership, courteous demeanor, and liberality, every Jurisdictional Bishop chose him as a vital part of his administration. He was religious education director, administrative assistant, district superintendent and was finally made Bishop Designate to be consecrated to succeed Jurisdictional Bishop Rushie L. Dixon. He was a loyal servant; therefore, the National Church, with the agreement of the people, made the right choice and placed him in the position to lead the Jurisdiction when it was determined that Bishop Dixon could no longer serve effectively.

As the De facto Jurisdictional Bishop of the Central Florida First Jurisdiction, he had satisfied all requirements of the Church Of God in Christ, Inc., and was only awaiting the date for Consecration. He attended all training sessions in Memphis, paid all financial obligations, purchased the purple shirt, Episcopal ring, Pectoral Cross and other Clerical dress (at a cost of thousands of dollars) so as to be ready on the day of consecration. He presided over the Jurisdictional assembly and coordinated all of the administrative affairs of the jurisdiction. This was not a problem to him because he had been actively involved in all phases of the administration of the jurisdiction for more than thirty years. One of his responsibilities was that of providing pastoral leadership for the late Bishop's Church. Because he lived and pastored in Gainesville, Florida, approximately 80 miles from the Bishop's Church in Jacksonville, it was not feasible for him to personally provide what

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the congregation needed. In conference with the officers and members of the Bishop's Church it was decided that they would bring in a preacher to serve as an interim preacher for about six months. One of our national evangelists agreed to serve the Church in that capacity, an agreement was signed engaging him to come on each weekend for an agreed amount. After several weeks passed, the officers of the Bishop's Church informed Jurisdictional Bishop Designate Williams that they were no longer able to afford to pay the amount that was agreed upon; consequently, it was their desire to terminate the agreement. The Preacher agreed to terminate the agreement, but only if he would be paid the amount agreed under the contract. When it appeared that the local congregation did not intend to pay, the preacher had his lawyer to write them and give them notice that he would bring legal action to obtain a judgment for the preacher. As a concerned leader, Bishop Williams stepped up and paid an amount of more than \$20,000 to keep the Church out of Court. It appears that he had planned to adjust the situation after he had been consecrated and appointed Jurisdictional Bishop. With that problem settled, it appears that all pertinent matters were settled and operating well again.

In the month of September 2011 the National Bishops Conference met in Jacksonville and Bishop Designate Williams was one of the host Bishops for the Conference, in one of the services, an Elder of the Church is said to have passed a letter to the Presiding Bishop which contained an allegation that Bishop Designate Williams had placed his hand on the thigh of the said brother more than 30 years ago. As I understand it, there was nothing in the allegation that accused him of any act that might be classified as salacious, but as soon as the letter was delivered, talk began all over the place.

It concerns me that the information contained in the letter was known by persons on the outside almost as soon as it was in the hands of the Presiding Bishop. While having dinner with my wife and guests at a seafood restaurant, the Elder who had delivered the letter came in. We invited him to join us at our table. I told him what I had heard and he verified the fact that what I had heard was true. Because I knew both of the parties, I agreed to talk with him and Designate Bishop Williams. We met in front of the Hyatt Regency Hotel, and after reasoning with both of them from the Word, the accuser said he was sorry for what he had done, begged Bishop Designate Williams pardon and agreed to withdraw the allegation. A call was made to the Adjutant General and General Counsel, and the five of us met in the hotel where the accuser wrote a withdrawal of the allegation, signed it and gave it to the Adjutant General and the General Counsel for delivery to the General Board.

I have heard, by the "grapevine," that the submission of the letter of withdrawal was quite shocking to the General Board and those who had set their plans to make a big gain from the false allegations that had been leveled against Bishop Designate Williams. It is said

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that they began immediately to get persons to come forth and testify that they had also been "touched by the hand of Bishop Designate Williams." They did not seem to know just when it was, but that the experience was similar to that which was alleged in the letter. It appears that these new testimonies played a significant part in helping the General Board to delay the consecration of Bishop Designate Williams. Unfortunately, Central Florida First is without a Jurisdictional Bishop and the Bishop's Church is without a pastor. Our prayers are constantly made for both the Jurisdiction and the local Church. More things are wrought by prayer than this world ever dreamed of.

I have just received an invitation to the Inaugural Banquet honoring the new Jurisdictional Bishop Designate for Central Florida First. The Inaugural Banquet is scheduled for November 30, 2012 here in Jacksonville, Florida. It appears that the General Board has made its choice and everything is now in order. The person chosen was an associate of Bishop Designate Williams for years and shared interesting learning experiences together. I am certain that he shares the disappointment that his brother has been made to suffer at the hands of those who planned, participated in, contributed to, and provided the consideration required to effect the same. Brother Williams has been made to suffer times of great anguish, loss of thousands of dollars and moments that have tried his **faith**. Our prayers are with Brother Williams, and we pray that the Church that he loves and has supported the greater part of his life will stand by him and see to it that he is reimbursed for the thousands of dollars he was made to pay as he sought to protect the dignity and welfare of those that he had been assigned by the National Church to protect. **We are the Church Of God In Christ, it was not his debt, it was ours.**

VIII. ACCOUNTABILITY-

The Presiding Bishop and General Board, those persons who have been entrusted with the **executive** leadership of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., when the General Assembly is not in session, but whose actions are always subject to the approval or rejection by the General Assembly, serve a vital role in the operation of our great Church. They have been chosen because they are considered to be men of integrity; therefore, it is expected that they are ready, willing, and delighted to give a report to the General Assembly as to their performance during the quadrennium that ends in November of this year. During the General Assembly in April of each year the General Board seems never to have adequate time to make a report on matters which are of real concern to the Church. They tell us of the number of funerals they attended and the number of appointments they have made, but they never find time to report on the bad decisions they have made or the other problem areas in the Church that are driving people away.

IX. IN ORDER THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO EVALUATE THE WORK OF THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL BOARD, AS A CONDITION PRECEDENT TO DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE WORTHY TO BE CONSIDERED FOR RE-ELECTION TO THE BOARD FOR ANOTHER FOUR-YEAR TERM, I HEREBY PETITION THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Call for the General Board to present to the General Assembly the Official Minutes of the meeting in which the decision was made and approved by a majority vote of the General Board for the National Church to join with the Southwest Kansas Jurisdiction in taking Emmanuel COGIC, Wichita, Kansas into the civil courts to attempt to solve a Church matter which could have been easily solved within the Church by a 5th Grade Sunday School student by the knowledge he had learned in his Sunday School class. A reading of the minutes of this Board's meeting will reveal to us the Board members who comprised the majority needed for the action to be effected.
2. Call for the General Board minutes of the meeting in which a majority of the General Board voted - listing the name of each - to approve the "bogus and COGIC **unconstitutional** order relieving Bishop Holsey of being pastor of his two churches and also relieving him of being the **Prelate of Delaware.**" There is information available in which certain General Board members state that they did not participate in such a meeting, that they did not agree with the action which the Board is said to have approved, that to their knowledge there was no reason for such action, and that it never should have taken place.
3. **A report** showing the total number of Jurisdictional Convocations, Conventions, or Assemblies to which the Presiding Bishop has been invited to speak. The report should show the amount of the offering he received in each of the Jurisdictions.
4. A report of the number of National Conventions, Conferences or other National Assemblies to which the Presiding Bishop has been invited to speak and the amount of the offering or honorarium he received.
5. **A report** of the total number of Inaugural Banquets for newly consecrated Jurisdictional Bishops or Auxiliary Bishops to which he has been invited as guest speaker and the amount of the offering or honorarium he received at each.

6. A **report** as to the total number of obsequies or funerals for deceased Jurisdictional Bishops that the Presiding Bishop or his appointee has conducted and the amount of the honorarium he or his appointee received.
7. Call for a **report** from the Director of the Annual National Holy Convocation Program of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. This report should show the thousands of dollars that the sale of thousands of DVD's, sold during and after the Holy Convocation, should bring into the National Treasury each year. Note: The Official Day Service, where all of the officers, members and friends gather to hear the annual message from the Church's leader, is the property of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. revenue produced from the sale of this all-important service should show us how much one ministry of the Church can generate - if used appropriately - generate funds to enable the Church in carrying out the mission that we believe to be God-given.

X. THE PRESIDING BISHOP AND THE OTHER ELEVEN (11) MEMBERS WHO COMPRISE THE GENERAL BOARD OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, INC. ARE ALL AGENTS OF OUR BELOVED CHURCH.

When they preach, teach, speak, or minister in our Churches, they have already been adequately provided for. All of the offerings or honorariums that are given for the service they render, as agents of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., should be deposited in the **National Treasury** and not in their personal coffers. The Jurisdiction or Church where they render service should forward the amount received to the National Treasury for appropriate credit. These funds could very well be placed in an **investment fund** to generate revenue to assist struggling Churches.

It should be further observed that the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. allows the Presiding Bishop and General Board members, who have been blessed to have been elected from among the Jurisdictional Bishops of the College of Jurisdictional and Auxiliary Bishops to serve our beloved Church in this very noble capacity, to pastor one local congregation and to preside over one ecclesiastical jurisdiction. As pastor of a local congregation, they share in the tithes and offerings of the Church, they are given Appreciation Services or Anniversaries, and local congregations take very good care of their pastors. As Jurisdictional Bishops, they make annual visits to each of the Districts within the jurisdiction at which tune they receive what is known as an **official offering**. They usually conduct an Annual Holy Convocation and the whole Jurisdiction gives the Jurisdictional Prelate an official offering. In the Jurisdiction there are other Conventions from which the Prelate receives a financial blessing. It is easy to see that the Presiding Bishop and General Board members should not find it difficult to give God praise.

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Just think, in addition to a liberal expense account and the right to receive undetermined funds from their pastorates or Jurisdictions, the National Church gives them an additional \$540,000 (more than a half million dollars) in honorariums. They are given center stage (in 12 big chairs) at the Church's seven annual conventions; and, even in the General Assembly where the Chairman of the Assembly should be the highest recognized officer, they are given center stage. The General Board is highly honored.

XL THE BIBLEWAY IS THE BEST WAY FOR US: IT IS THE ONLY WAY

Over the years, since the "Coup d'état" in our beloved Church in 1968, God has led a few of us to try to show our beloved leaders that we are on a path that is leading us in a way that is diametrically opposed to what our Biblical Doctrine provides for us. **Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr.**, first Presiding Bishop, saw it before he died: He saw where we were headed and told us that whatever time he had left he would try and bring us back to true holiness. In the earlier days, after the death of Bishop Mason, he was one of the prime movers who led us away, and he felt the urge to try and help bring us back to what we believe. Unfortunately, he died before he could effect a program that would bring us back on course. **Bishop Louis Henry Ford**, second Presiding Bishop, tried to bring us back, but it appears that those in leadership positions had tasted the honor and blessings that the New System provided for them and they did not really work with his program. He did a restoration program in Mississippi, he renovated Mason Temple that was built by our Founder, Bishop Mason, conducted a building program at our school in Lexington, and tried to call us back to the **Way of Holiness** that our Founders taught. All of the expensive uniforms and "outside show" did not appeal to him. He died in office after having tried to bring us back to the Bible Way. **Bishop Chandler D. Owens**, third Presiding Bishop, tried to bring us back in line with the pattern that our fathers gave us. He sought to set in order an Information-Education Program that would teach pastors and members what our Faith is all about. He set up a Financial Program for the Church and fiscal policies that caused millions of dollars to be in the accounts for the Church. He called upon the General Board members to give back their honorariums for a period, and this was done. He was not re-elected for a second term. **Bishop G. E. Patterson**, took over from Bishop Owens, and remodeled the auditorium at Mason Temple, thus making it more attractive and functional for those who gathered there. Bishop Owens was alive and able to see the money he had raised put to good use. Bishop Patterson represented the Church on television each week, which not only helped the National Church, but it also brought his local congregation into international prominence. He conducted crusades throughout the nation proclaiming the message of Holiness. Earlier in his ministry he had left the Church Of God in Christ, Inc., the Church in which he was reared, because of certain practices which conflicted with his thinking and what our Church said it believed. He remained out for about 12 or 13 years and then returned. He

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was appointed Jurisdictional Bishop of a part of the state of Tennessee. He re-established a flourishing ministry in Memphis, he won the love and support of the people throughout the Church, and he was elected Presiding Bishop of the Church. During his tenure he discovered the reason for conflict in the organizational structure of the Church that he thought needed correcting. He expressed his findings and a suggested solution in words to the affect that we could move the Church forward if each person would operate in the lane to which he had been assigned. His statement was indeed a wise one, but those who were closely associated with him did not take heed to his suggestion nor did they seem to learn from it. He, by powerful preaching of the Word, tried to bring us back to what we profess as our Faith, but he died frustrated.

At present, **Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr.**, the fifth person to hold the position of Presiding Bishop of the Church Of God In Christ, Inc., will complete his tenure of service in November, 2012. Again, the General Assembly is scheduled to elect another person, pursuant to the Constitution, that the people choose to lead the Church that still carries the name Church Of God In Christ, Inc. Who will that person be? Did we remember to consult God to see what His will for us is? Don't you think we should? Our Constitution may not require that we consult God, but "our rule of Faith and Practice" tells us: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6) When Bishop Blake was elected Presiding Bishop he was a Jurisdictional Bishop, but he divested himself of the position of Jurisdictional Bishop; consequently, it appears that he is now ineligible to run for the General Board in the coming election because only Jurisdictional Bishops are eligible to run. If he does not choose to run in the forthcoming election, I am sure that the officers and members of the West Angeles Church will all be delighted to have their beloved pastor at home with them at the congregation that, as Judge of the First and only Ecclesiastical Court of the Church Of God in Christ, Inc., it was my pleasure to decide the case, sign and issue the Order, April 12, 1973, that confirmed Elder Charles E. Blake as pastor of what has become the largest congregation in the Church Of God In Christ, Inc.: West Angeles Church Of God in Christ. The record will also show that in the last election I voted for Bishop Charles E. Blake, Sr., and he was, with the help of my vote, elected by a "**Landslide.**" He served as First Assistant Presiding Bishop with Bishop G. E. Patterson, and for almost four years he has been our Presiding Bishop. The record will give us a picture of the leadership style that is followed and the results received.

Having worked with each of the Presiding Bishops, I was able to gain insights as to the degree of success each thought he had gained during his administration. Each one indicated that it was a real struggle, and that he had not accomplished what might have been accomplished if there had been better cooperation among the leaders who were on his leadership team. It has not been my pleasure to talk with our present Presiding Bishop, since it seems that he is always too busy, to get his thoughts, but there is one

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indicator as to what his feelings are. In the Board of Bishops Meeting, during the National Women's Convention, in Atlanta, Georgia, May 31, 2012, Bishop Sheard, Chairman of the Board of Bishops, had this to say: "Bishop Blake has a sharp mind, he is a fine individual. He was overloaded with the tremendous burden of the National Church, so he gave the Laity Report to the Board of Bishops. We are taking the load off of the Presiding Bishop. Let's encourage our members to give \$20.00 per member per year. Appoint key persons to assist in the promotion and collection of the **Laity Reports.**" "Overloaded with the tremendous burden of the National Church": seems to be an assignment to which the General Assembly did not assign to the Presiding Bishop. As Ex-Officio Directors of the Church Of God In Christ, when the General Assembly is not in session, he and 11 other men carry out what has been assigned to them. He has a First and Second Assistant and nine other men to help him. Because the Chairman of the Board of Bishops has recovered from very serious physical challenges, he said that he desires just to preach. Since he feels that preaching is what he does best, I highly recommend that our beloved Chairman will confine himself to preaching and accept the **Proposed Program** that I suggest as the means by which we can involve the Church in a program that will help us to raise more money than we have ever raised.

1. **Name of Proposed Program: Honest To God Loyalty Membership Rally**
2. **Participants:** All members of The Church Of God in Christ, Inc.
3. **Leaders for Rally:** The Presiding Bishop, General Board Members, Jurisdictional Bishops and Pastors
4. **Amount Requested:** \$20.00 for each adult member
5. **Procedure to be followed:** Each member will do the following:
 - Certify to us the actual number of adult members that comprise your local congregation. The number you give is the number that we will record because it will be the **TRUTH.**
 - Make out a cashier's check to the Church Of God in Christ, Inc. for an amount equal to \$20.00 for each person claimed. This amount should be forwarded to Headquarters, Memphis, Tennessee, on or before November 1, 2012.

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- **Observation:** Leaders of the Church Of God in Christ, Inc., if there were no Church Of God in Christ, you would not be privileged to serve us in the positions that provide a good life for you and your families! Honorariums, Official Offerings, Anniversaries, Appreciation Services, and Tithes and Offerings. We should be more than happy to join with the **LAITY** and rally to support the **Church** that we all should love.

We owe it to our **Church** to encourage and assist our members in giving an affirmative response to the Call of the **Parent Body**. If we gladly accept a \$100.00 contribution for ourselves in appreciation or anniversaries, perhaps we may help the process by keeping \$80.00 and allowing \$20.00 be used to help some other members to participate. Our **National Financial Secretary** tells us that 50,000 is the largest number of Laity that has participated in the Laity Rally. He suggested that if we were able to get the number up to 200,000 we would be in good shape. Let's get busy and prove that we are **leaders and members** who are honest, truthful, and **loyal** to the **Church** that makes us "**Somebody**" and the **Church** that we **love** most dearly.

XII. WE ARE VICTIMS OF AN ACUTE CASE OF "THE TOO MANYYS"

- 1. WE HAVE TOO MANY HEADS AT THE TOP, AND MULTI-HEADED CREATURES** find it difficult to move in any one direction, especially when the specificity of functions is not carefully designated. Each tries to exert his authority, thus retarding progress. It matters not how competent or efficient the one up front may be; each of the others, in an attempt to have his way, can make the leader look bad. in our present **organizational structure**, it appears that the Presiding Bishop, whose title is restricted by the adjective **Presiding**, may be greatly hindered from effecting his desired program by the 11, whether for good or bad. "
- 2. WE HAVE TOO MANY JURISDICTIONAL BISHOPS** - The title Jurisdictional Bishop is given to men who are assigned, by the General Board, for whatever consideration is required, consecrated, and appointed to preside over a number of churches; one hundred or more, or four or six, which is called an Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. They are not consecrated as Bishops and then assigned to a Jurisdiction, but they are consecrated Jurisdictional Bishops which by the designation limits the scope of authority.

Every Jurisdiction creates at least one new Jurisdictional Bishop's credential holders report, one or two Administrative Assistants, several District Superintendent reports, a Jurisdictional Supervisor's report and multiple Missionary reports. This gives the appearance of **growth and progress**, but it's **not**: It is **retrogression**. We may increase the quantity of Jurisdictions, but the quality is diminished. If they are attempting to raise money, I can recommend several more effective ways.

3. **WE HAVE TOO MANY NATIONAL AND JURISDICTIONAL MEETINGS -**

We have seven (7) National Meetings, several Jurisdictional Meetings and one or two District Meetings each year, in all of the meetings, the format appears to be the same: At National Meetings we see the General Board sitting in twelve (12) large chairs on center stage, the Presiding Bishop preaches, and we all give him an **official offering**. The leader of the Convention or group preaches one night, and he/she is given an **official offering**. Very little time is given to study, training, and instruction as to what we are all about. The **vendors** are there to serve the **thousands of saints** who gather each year to greet the **customers** who come ready to purchase the gifts that seem especially prepared for them. The registration packet includes an attractive tote bag, a pen, and paper. Very little, if any, educational material is included, and the program is usually crowded with dinners and Gospel singing, thus leaving little time for anything very constructive. If I were to describe our situation in **biological terms** I would say that our **local Churches** serve as **hosts** to the Jurisdictional and National Church **which serve as the parasites** that sap all of the financial strength from them without giving anything back in return. This practice of drawing the local members' attention away from home is killing our **local Churches**, the basic unit of the Church Of God in Christ, Inc., if this pattern continues, our system will destroy itself.

OBSERVATION: Wisdom suggests that we consider staying at home for a while and give attention to building our local congregations: Spiritually, financially, and numerically. We travel so much until we don't have time to tell the people - "Follow Me Home."

4. WE HAVE TOO MANY OFFICIAL OFFERINGS -

The term **official offering** was never intended to denote or connote giving an **official offering** whenever the official visits. The **official offering** was given to the Leader once each year at the National, Jurisdictional, or District Assembly where he presided. Bishops and Superintendents received their basic support from their local churches, but the **official offering** is given them to augment their income for the special service they render. Under our present system, it appears that those in **official positions**, such as **Presiding Bishop** and **Jurisdictional Bishop**, allow the people to bless them with "**Official Offerings**" frequently. They seem to enjoy getting all they can, canning all they get and sitting on the can to secure the same. It places them in position to be classified as **greedy**, a characteristic that we think is quite inappropriate for leaders of our **faith**. Perhaps the recipients of the love gifts should be grateful for what the Lord has provided in our present system, because one who receives is considered blessed. In our "rule of faith and practice" Acts 20:35, St. Paul states: And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The statement may be paradoxical, but life has proved it to be true.

NOTE: Can you imagine how wonderful it would be to hear that an official is coming to visit you with a message of inspiration, information and hope and not to receive an official offering.

Unlike the administrations that preceded the present one, it seems that no particular effort is being made to try and bring the Church back on course with the Biblical principles in which the Church Of God In Christ, Inc. is reputed to believe. The present leadership appears to have adopted a "laissez faire" pattern of leadership: If the people enjoy singing, shouting, and dancing and giving large financial offerings - without asking any questions - they just preach sermons that, with the help of loud organ music, makes them happy and motivates them to "dance, dance, dance all night." To be sure, this practice may seem good, and has the effect of keeping the people in a dazed condition, but it is not good for the spiritual growth and development of the people nor the Church. There are some things that are going on in certain circles of the Church that are not right, and we believe that all things that are not right are unrighteous, and that all unrighteousness is sin. (I John 5:17)

There are some other things that have been proved to be unethical and even unlawful. There are some that are unconstitutional and which violate the rules we have set for ourselves. Finally, there are some things that I have taken the liberty to classify as unbelievable. Heretofore, I have credited the perpetrators with possessing a better understanding and a higher level of moral and spiritual character that would not allow them to yield to such acts that would work ill to their

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brothers and sisters. Even though I have never heard our present leaders testify that they are filled with the "Holy Ghost;" I had assumed that they were, because one of the Biblical Qualifications for leadership in the Church — beginning at the deacon's level — is that men must be "full of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 6:3) Men who are filled with the "**Holy Ghost**" don't mistreat their brothers and refuse to **repent**.

WHAT CAN MOTIVATE US TO RETURN TO THE BIBLE AND FOLLOW IT AS "OUR RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE?" Will it take an **earthquake in California or a hurricane in Florida?** Whatever it takes, I am sure that God will cause it to happen. When thinking of what we might do to move us toward making the right decision, I looked to history to see what others have done that brought favorable results, in ancient Greece (411 B.C.), **Aristophanes's** play **Lysistrata** gives a comic account of **Lysistrata's** extraordinary mission to end the **Peloponnesian War**. **Lysistrata** persuades the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges to their husbands and lovers as a means of forcing the men to end the war. It worked, they ended the war. Because it appears that there may be some among us who have been reputed, in former times, to have been involved in certain unnatural salacious activities that are not appropriate for the saints, I immediately decided against calling a "**fast from approved sexual activity.**" We are our brother's keeper and must never do anything that might make our brothers or sisters stumble.

In ancient Israel more than 300 years before the time of Aristophanes in ancient Greece, the prophet Elijah called for no **dew** or **rain** until he gave the command. The lack of dew or **rain** seems to have made King Ahab and the people of Israel willing to make the choice to serve the True God. The record of history tells us that there are certain forces that can move us to make up our minds as to what choices we will make. There is one particular thing that comes to my mind that might make us agree to turn very quickly to the **Bible Way: Declare a fast on the money, the love of which is the "root of all evil."** If we will hold our **tithes and offerings, official offerings, Laity and credential holders reports, anniversary and appreciation service offerings** until we return to the **Bible Way**, it may hasten the day when we will gladly return to the "**Good Ole Bible Way.**" If we will adopt the **Bible Way of Tithing** we will find it unnecessary to have so many offerings and other **gimmicks** to raise money for ourselves in the name of the **Church**. If we will **tithe** and use **God's money** for the purpose for which it will be provided, God has promised to "*open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings that we will not have room to receive them.*" (Malachi 3:10) I think we would be wise to come back to the **Bible Way** immediately.

God's prescription for bringing us back to the Bible Way - "*If My people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land.*" (II Chronicles 7:14)

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IT IS ELECTION TIME, ARE WE READY TO CHOOSE NEW LEADERSHIP FOR OUR BELOVED CHURCH? At this time, we really don't seem to be in a position to conduct an intelligent **election** in our Church. **Reasonable** men would give the following reasons why we are not in position to vote for persons to lead our Church at this time:

1. We don't know the number of persons who **comprise the electorate** of our Church.
2. We don't know the candidates nor do we have a statement of their proposed program for the Church that will move us ahead to accomplish our mission.
3. We don't have a present-status report of the condition of the Church at this time from the present administration.
4. We need time to evaluate the present system to see if it is working and seek to ascertain the reasons why we don't have programs to provide financial and other needs for effective operations.
5. We are not ready to adopt the proposed absentee voting system for the forthcoming election: It's too soon. Even though we testify that we are saved, the absentee voting system opens the door for dishonesty in the voting process.

RECOMMENDATION: I recommend that we go to the **Holy Convocation in St. Louis** and enjoy a spiritual Convocation. Let the people preach, sing, pray, and see just how wonderful Convocation can be. We have enough things scheduled to take up our time. Let's delay the election until April, 2013 which allows time for us to rest, think, and make wise decisions.

